

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS:

In the March 30, 2006 Office Action, claims 1-12 and 14-20 stand rejected in view of prior art, while claim 13 was indicated to contain allowable subject matter. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the March 30, 2006 Office Action, Applicants have amended claims 1, 2 and 7, 9-10, and 17, and canceled claims 8 and 16 as indicated above. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. Thus, claims 1-7, 9-15, and 17-20 are pending, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraphs 1-2 of the Office Action, claims 1-5 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hunter et al. (GB 2,060,542 A, herein after referred to as the Hunter patent) in view of Gur et al. (US Patent No. 5,433,060, hereinafter referred to as the Gur patent).

In paragraph 3 of the Office Action, claims 6-12, 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Hunter patent in view of the Gur patent as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Yamazaki (JP 54-070192, hereinafter referred to as the Yamazaki publication).

In paragraph 4 of the Office Action, claims 14, 15, 19 and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Hunter patent in view of the Gur patent and the Yamazaki publication as applied to claim 7, and further in view of Nakagawa et al. (US Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0000179 A1, hereinafter referred to as the Nakagawa publication).

In response, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 to recite the elements of cancelled claims 8 (the product transport mechanism) and 16 (the product transport mechanism transporting a bag from a packaging apparatus), as well as the recitation that the bag transport mechanism is configured to maintain the inclination of the bag in the vertical plane while the bag is being transported. The Applicants respectfully submit that this structure is neither disclosed nor suggested by the Hunter patent, the Gur patent, the Yamazaki publication, or any other prior art of record, alone or in combination.

The Hunter patent discloses a mounting system which simply places and mounts a plurality of bags on a horizontally advanced display card. However, the Hunter patent fails to disclose a packaging apparatus, a bag transport mechanism transporting a bag from the packaging apparatus, or a bag transport mechanism that is configured to maintain the inclination of the bag in the vertical plane while the bag is being transported.

In addition, the Gur patent discloses an apparatus for securing bags to a flexible strip, but fails to disclose or suggest a bag transport mechanism that is configured to maintain the inclination of the bag in the vertical plane while the bag is being transported.

Furthermore, the Yamazaki publication discloses a device for creating a continuous book of samples by adhering the samples to a carrier substrate. Here, the inclination of the sample is changed from straight to curved in the vertical plane while the sample is being transported (i.e., when the sample 1 is being lifted upward out of the magazine 2 and then folded by contact with the guide plate 6). Thus, the Yamazaki publication fails to disclose or suggest a bag transport mechanism that is configured to maintain the inclination of the bag in the vertical plane while the bag is being transported toward the mounting mechanism.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Moreover, Applicants believe that the dependent claims 2-7, 9-15, and 17-20 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claim 1, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Also, the dependent claims 2-7, 9-15, and 17-20 are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claim 1, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions as set forth in the dependent claims.

Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of the dependent claims be withdrawn in view of the above comments and amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, claim 13 was indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form, including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter and the thorough examination of this application. However, in view of the amendments to claim 1, the Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claim 13 is now allowable in its current form.

Other claim amendments

Claims 2 and 7 were amended in order to amend the word "product" to "bag", and thereby make the usage of this word consistent with the previously amended claims in this application. Claims 9-10 and 17 were amended in order to correct the dependencies thereof in view of the cancellation of claim 8.

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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